music appeared. A very large number of plays were written in the nineteenth century.

The theatre has been one of the most potent agencies for popular education. To the masses, almost or entirely illiterate as the large majority of them have been, the written character cannot provide a direct medium of instruction. Every one, however, could and can see a play. In the cities and large towns buildings have been constructed specifically for the drama. These, however, have not been so numerous as might be supposed. In Nanking, for example, before the days of the cinema, only two theatres existed and these were not regularly open. Temples have often been used for dramatic performances, even when the plays have contained little or nothing immediately connected with religion. Frequently a raised platform over a street or in a field has served for a stage. At the periodical fairs in market towns and on other special occasions a performance or series of performances by a dramatic troupe has been a usual part of the program. Since many of the plays have historical themes and the great virtues, such as filial piety, are often extolled and vividly illustrated, and vice has been represented as punished, the populace has obtained some idea, even though in distorted and more than semi-fictional form, of their country's past, and has seen orthodox morals held up for praise.

The main features of the theatre can be fairly quickly described. The buildings designed especially for the theatre have been Elizabethan in their simplicity, except when, as in some instances in recent years, they have been affected by the modern West. At one end of the building is a raised platform for the stage. In front of this is the main floor; with benches, or

with backless chairs clustered around little tables, and on three sides a gallery, also with seats. Formerly men and women were usually—although not always—in different parts of the house. Now in the cities this separation has largely ceased. During the progress of the play attendants move about the audience with tea and food or with the familiar towels wrung out of hot water, with which hands and face are wiped. Individuals enter and leave at will and carry on conversations during the performance.

Very little scenery is employed—perhaps a table and a few chairs and at times a rude painting of a city wall and gate. Much